Executive Director's Report to the Colorado River Board of California

May 10, 2018

ADMINISTRATION

Minutes of the April 11, 2018 Meeting of the Colorado River Board

The draft minutes from the April 11, 2018, Board meeting will be distributed for review and proposed adoption at the regularly scheduled June 13th Board meeting.

Proposed Fiscal Year-2018/2019 Budgets for the Colorado River Board of California, Six Agency Committee and Colorado River Authority

The proposed Fiscal Year-2018/2019 budgets for the Colorado River Board of California, the Six Agency Committee and the Colorado River Authority are attached for your review and consideration. The proposed budgets for these entities include the following:

- Governor's Budget for the Colorado River Board of California is $2,222,000, compared to $2,149,000 for FY-2017/2018;
- Proposed Six Agency Committee Contributions is $2,150,000, compared to $2,100,000 in contributions for FY-2017/2018; and
- Proposed Colorado River Authority Contributions is $65,000, compared to $50,000 in contributions for FY-2017/2018.

The final FY-2018/2019 budgets for the Colorado River Board of California, Six Agency Committee and the Colorado River Authority will be presented for Board approval and adoption at its June 13, 2018 regularly scheduled meeting.

Approval of the "Agreement Establishing Programmatic Funding for Colorado River Basin Weather Modification"

Attached is the final version of the "Agreement Establishing Programmatic Funding for Colorado River Basin Weather Modification" for review and approval by the Six Agency Committee at the June 13th meeting. An informational presentation of the agreement was made at the January 10, 2018 Board meeting. The purpose of this agreement is to combine the management, administration, and funding of various Upper Basin weather modification activities into a comprehensive cooperative, cost-sharing funding agreement that would extend through Water Year-2026 (i.e., the remaining interim period of the 2007 Guidelines). All of the Basin states and agencies have already executed the programmatic agreement with the exception of the Southern Nevada Water Authority and the Six Agency Committee.

The weather modification program is considered an integral element of basinwide drought contingency planning efforts and is specifically identified as a primary component of the Upper Basin

Drought Contingency Plan (DCP). This agreement is compatible with and supports the Upper Basin DCP and continues program collaboration among the basin states.

Approval of the "Lower Colorado River Riparian Restoration Project Needs Assessment—Scope of Work"

Also attached is the scope of work (SOW) for the Lower Colorado River Riparian Restoration Project Needs Assessment by RiversEdge West, formerly known as the Tamarisk Coalition, for review and approval by the SAC at the June Board meeting. Tamarisk management involves the removal of invasive, non-native plants such as tamarisk and re-vegetating with native plants, resulting in potential water savings to the system as well as a diverse composition of habitat beneficial to wildlife. The purpose of the SOW is to determine resources, schedule, and budget needed to implement a large-scale riparian restoration project in the Lower Colorado River (LCR) basin. A planning report will be prepared by November 2019 to identify potential opportunities for restoration in the LCR basin and to perform a needs assessment for future phases of the project.

Approval of Natural Resource Results, LLC Agreement

Board staff would also like to continue retaining the services of the Board's Washington, D.C. consultant for FY-2018/2019 and will be requesting renewal and approval of the agreement at the June board meeting. Ms. Sara Tucker would continue to represent the Board. The major responsibilities of her work would include monitoring congressional and administration activities affecting management of the Colorado River, particularly as they relate to California, providing intelligence and insight on federal actions, and strategizing on opportunities to advance the interests of the Board on behalf of California.

COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER REPORT

As of May 7th, the water level at Lake Powell was 3,609.37 feet with 12.67 million acre-feet (MAF) of storage, or 52% of capacity. The water level at Lake Mead was 1,083.66 feet with 10.33 MAF of storage, or 40% of capacity. As of May 6th, the total system storage was 30.43 MAF, or 51% of capacity, which is similar to the system storage at this time last year.

As of April 30th, the Upper Colorado River basin reservoirs, excluding Lake Powell, ranged from 38% of capacity at Fontenelle, 85% of capacity at Flaming Gorge Reservoirs in Wyoming and Utah; 96% of capacity at Morrow Point and 60% of capacity at Blue Mesa Reservoirs in Colorado; and 72% of capacity at Navajo Reservoir in New Mexico. The March 2018 observed inflow and April 2018 inflow forecast into Lake Powell are 0.332 MAF (50% of normal) and 0.45 MAF (43% of normal), respectively. Wyoming's Fontenelle reservoir volume has been reduced in anticipation of spring runoff as the April-July unregulated Upper Green River inflow forecasts for Fontenelle reservoir is about 900 KAF (124% of average).

On May 9th, Reclamation released an updated version of the CRSS/MTOM Five Year Probability table based upon the modeling results of the May 2018 24-Month Study Report. This updated probability indicates that the probability of any level of shortage condition in Lake Mead is now 52% in 2020, and above 64% in subsequent years. In conjunction with the release of the Five-

Year table, Reclamation Commissioner Brenda Burman issued a press release urging a rededication of efforts among the Basin states to complete the drought contingency plans in both basins by the end of 2018. A copy of the updated Five-Year table (see below) and Reclamation's press release have been included in the packet materials.

Percent of Traces with Event or System Condition
Results from April 2018 MTOM/CRSS[1,2,3,4,5] (values in percent)

	Event or System Condition	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Upper Basin – Lake Powell	**Equalization Tier**	**2**	**15**	**17**	**20**	**24**
	Equalization – annual release > 8.23 maf	*2*	*15*	*17*	*20*	*22*
	Equalization – annual release = 8.23 maf	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*2*
	Upper Elevation Balancing Tier	**96**	**51**	**53**	**52**	**45**
	Upper Elevation Balancing – annual release > 8.23 maf	*76*	*44*	*44*	*43*	*35*
	Upper Elevation Balancing – annual release = 8.23 maf	*19*	*6*	*8*	*9*	*9*
	Upper Elevation Balancing – annual release < 8.23 maf	*0*	*1*	*1*	*0*	*1*
	Mid-Elevation Release Tier	**3**	**34**	**21**	**16**	**18**
	Mid-Elevation Release – annual release = 8.23 maf	*0*	*0*	*0*	*1*	*2*
	Mid-Elevation Release – annual release = 7.48 maf	*3*	*34*	*21*	*15*	*16*
	Lower Elevation Balancing Tier	**0**	**<1**	**8**	**11**	**13**
Lower Basin – Lake Mead	**Shortage Condition – any amount (Mead ≤ 1,075 ft)**	**N**	**52**	**64**	**68**	**65**
	Shortage – 1st level (Mead ≤ 1,075 and ≥ 1,050)	*0*	*51*	*43*	*38*	*29*
	Shortage – 2nd level (Mead < 1,050 and ≥ 1,025)	*0*	*1*	*21*	*23*	*24*
	Shortage – 3rd level (Mead < 1,025)	*0*	*0*	*<1*	*6*	*12*
	Surplus Condition – any amount (Mead ≥ 1,145 ft)	**0**	**0**	**3**	**6**	**10**
	Surplus – Flood Control	*0*	*0*	*0*	*1*	*2*
	Normal or ICS Surplus Condition	**100**	**48**	**33**	**26**	**25**

[1] Reservoir initial conditions based on results from 35 simulations of December 31, 2018 conditions using the Mid-term Probabilistic Operations Model. MTOM uses the April 3, 2018 unregulated inflow forecast from the CBRFC.
[2] Each of the 35 initial conditions were coupled with 110 hydrologic inflow sequences based on resampling of the observed natural flow record from 1906-2015 for a total of 3,850 traces analyzed.
[3] Percentages shown may not sum to 100% due to rounding to the nearest percent.
[4] Percentages shown may not be representative of the full range of future possibilities that could occur with different modeling assumptions.
[5] The chance of a Lower Basin Shortage in calendar year 2019 is negligible.

8 RECLAMATION

Table 1: Updated 5-Year Probability Table from the April 2018 MTOM/CRSS modeling runs.

Accounting and Water Use Report for Calendar Year 2017

On April 20th, Reclamation released the second and full draft of the Calendar Year 2017 Colorado River Accounting and Water User Report for review. One new feature in this year's report is the inclusion of a series of maps that depict the major water users and entitlement holders and the general locations of their service areas in the Lower Basin. Comments have been submitted on the second draft by the Lower Basin entities and Reclamation is expected to release the final report in mid-May. Finally, it is worth noting that California's total consumptive use of mainstream water in 2017 was just under 4.03 MAF, the lowest that it has been since 1950.

2019 Annual Operating Plan

Reclamation has released the proposed consultation schedule for the development of the 2019 Annual Operating Plan (AOP) for Colorado River Reservoirs. The first consultation meeting will be held on May 30th via webinar. The second and final 2019 AOP consultation meetings will be held on July 25th and September 13th, respectively, at McCarran Airport in Las Vegas, Nevada and will be available via webinar.

The Colorado River Basin Project Act of 1968 requires that the Secretary prepare a report documenting the actual operations for the previous water year and the projected operations for the upcoming water year. Based on the operating criteria established within the 2007 Interim Guidelines, the August 24-Month Study sets the operational tiers at Lakes Powell and Mead for the upcoming year.

Based on the results of the 2017 August 24-Month Study report, the projected elevation of Lake Powell on January 1, 2018 sets the operation of Lake Powell in the Upper Elevation Balancing Tier, starting with an 8.23 MAF release, with the possibility for mid-year adjustment to Powell's release and operations. According to Sections 6.B.1 and 6.B.4 of the 2007 Interim Guidelines, and under the most probable inflow scenario into Lake Powell from the 2018 April 24-Month Study report, there will be a balancing release of up to 9.0 MAF for the remainder of Water Year-2018.

Colorado Basin River Forecast Center Water Supply Webinar

The Colorado River Basin River Forecast Center issued its "May 1, 2018 Water Supply Forecast Discussion" and held a water supply webinar on May 7th to provide an update of current and forecasted conditions. A high amplitude atmospheric "blocking pattern" which was established in early December has resulted in extended dry and warm conditions in April. In early April, a strong storm system brought significant amount of precipitation to the far northern and eastern boundaries of the Upper Colorado River Basin. The storm system was warm but slightly improved snowpack conditions at high elevations.

Precipitation

Similar to previous months, precipitation conditions in April were below average throughout most of the Basin. The areas that received near to above average precipitation include the basins of northern Bear River, Yampa River, Colorado River headwaters, parts of the Gunnison River, parts of the Green River in Wyoming and tributaries to the Green River in central Utah (see Figure 1).

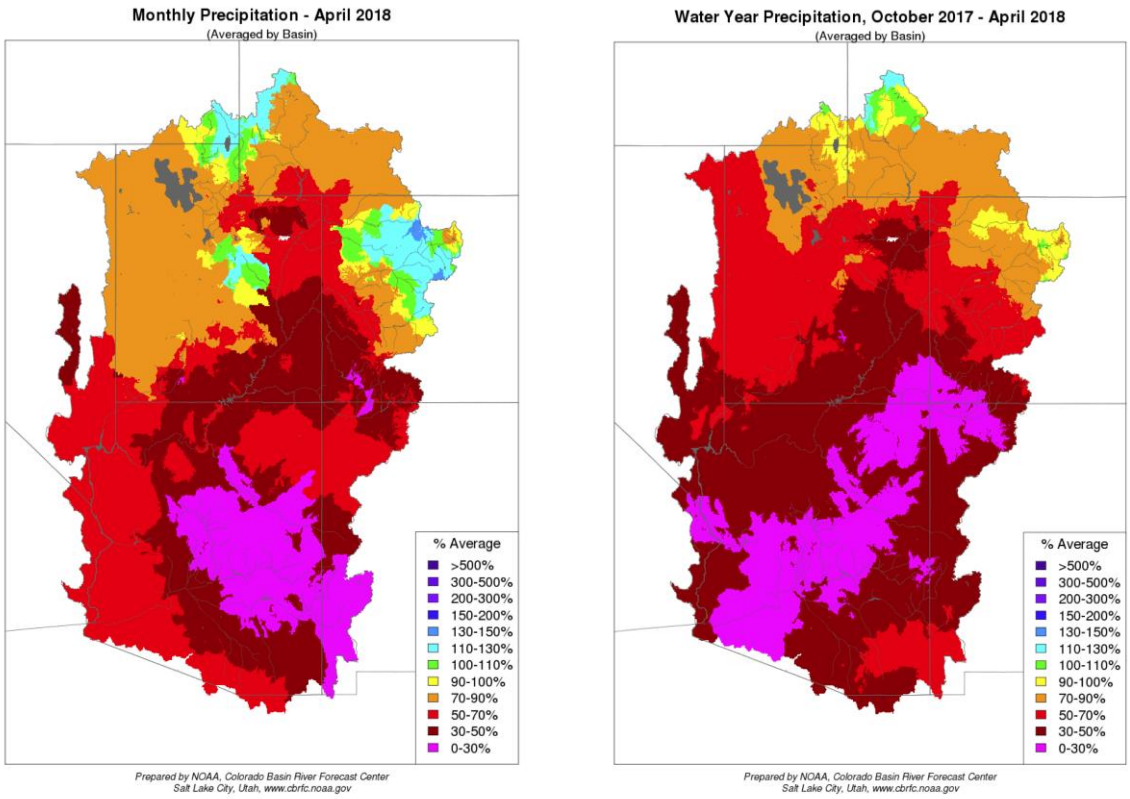

Figure 1: April 2018 and Water Year (October 2017-April 2018) Precipitation Distribution.

To date, precipitation conditions for Water Year-2018 have been below average for most of the Basin, with water year conditions at 70% of average and less. Areas within the San Juan, Dolores, Gunnison River Basin, and southeastern Utah river basins have water year precipitation amounts that rank as the lowest on record, while several areas of the Duchesne River Basin are ranked the second lowest on record for water year precipitation.

Temperature

The mean temperatures in April were above normal, but overall temperatures for spring have been near normal which has helped to retain the Basin's snowpack.

Snowpack

Although an early April storm system slightly improved snowpack conditions in high elevation areas of the Upper Basin, poor snowpack conditions persisted throughout the Basin for the remainder of the April. As of May 4th, SNOTEL data shows widespread poor snow conditions throughout the Basin (85% of median). Above normal snow pack conditions existed in the headwaters of the Green River Basin in Wyoming (120% of median).

As of May 4th, the seasonal maximum snow water equivalent (SWE) values for several areas of the Basin were below normal historical seasonal peak values. The seasonal maximum SWE values

for the Dolores, Duchesne, and Animas River Basins peaked similar to values from 2002, which had the lowest April to July unregulated inflow into Lake Powell on record. The Green River Basin in Wyoming was the only basin that peaked above normal, near 130% of the seasonal median.

Forecasted Runoff

The May 1st April to July streamflow volume forecast for Lake Powell decreased slightly from the April projections and is projected to be 3.0 MAF, or 42% of average, representing the 5th lowest inflow value on record (see Figure 2). The April to July inflow forecasts for Fontenelle (124% of average) and Flaming Gorge (102% of average) reservoirs are projected to be near to above average, while inflow forecasts for Blue Mesa (52% of average), McPhee (21% of average), and Navajo (27% of average) reservoirs are projected to be below average.

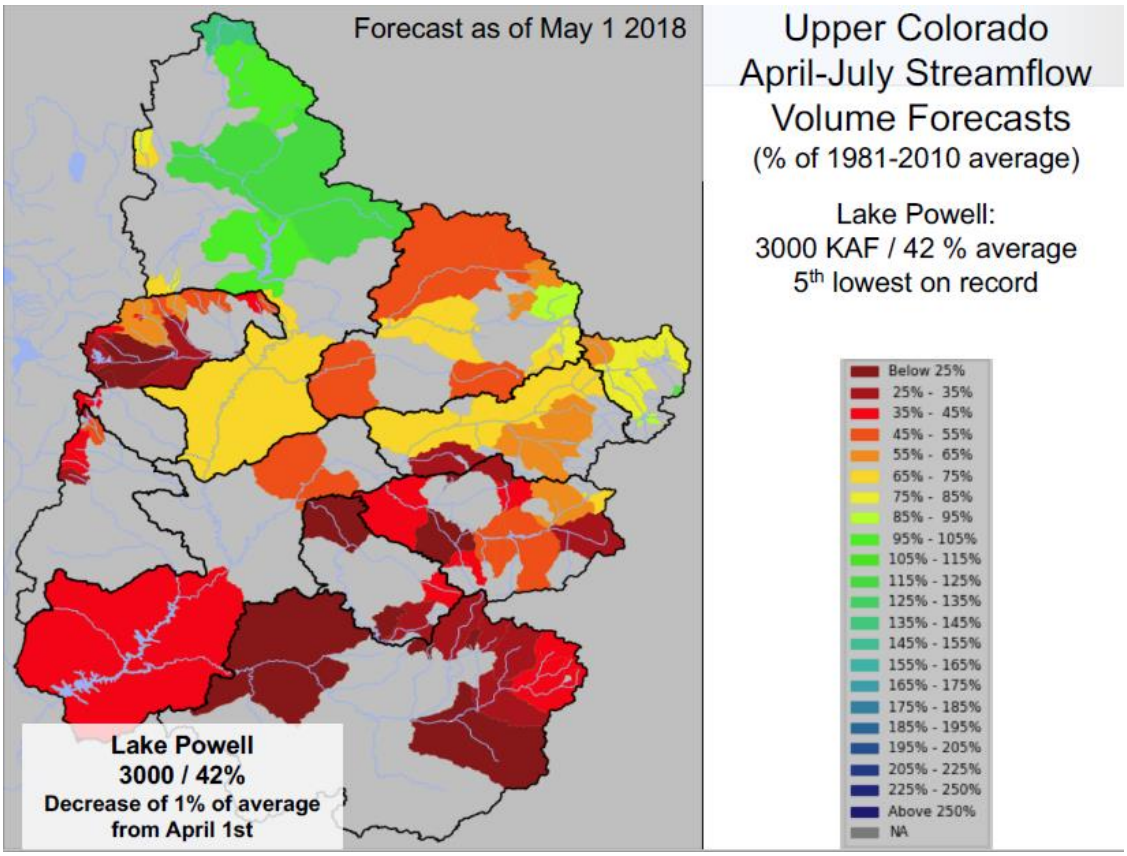

Figure 2: Upper Colorado April-July Streamflow Volume Forecast as of May 1, 2018.

<u>Paleo-Drought Workshop, April 19, 2018, San Pedro, California</u>

On April 19th, Board staff attended a paleo-drought workshop in San Pedro, California. The workshop highlighted the release of a new tree-ring study and database prepared by the University of Arizona for southern California watersheds in which researchers reconstructed 600 years of streamflow and precipitation data. The workshop also included a presentation by Executive Director

Harris on the status of Lower Basin and Upper Basin drought contingency planning efforts. The data were evaluated to identify the number and length of multi-year droughts that occurred before the modern historical period to provide planners with perspectives on how long and how frequent to plan for drought periods in the future.

The goal of the workshop was to help southern California water agencies and others strengthen drought resiliency, particularly in the context of the Governor's Executive Order B-37-16 to strengthen local drought resiliency by including adequate actions to respond to droughts lasting at least five years, as well as more frequent and severe periods of drought. The tree-ring study report noted that "…in southern California, a number of the reconstructions indicate that the 2012-2016 drought was the worst 5-year drought in the past six centuries, as measured by the percent of average annual precipitation or streamflow".

The new University of Arizona tree-ring study report for southern California watersheds can be viewed at: https://www.water.ca.gov/-/media/DWR-Website/Web-Pages/Water-Basics/Drought/Files/Publications-And-Reports/UofAZ-SoCal-tree-ring-report-dec-2017.pdf. For more information on paleo-streamflow reconstructions and analyses from tree rings across the western United States, see https://www.treeflow.info/.

COLORADO RIVER BASIN PROGRAM REPORTS

Basin States Drought Contingency Planning Efforts

On May 2nd, the Lower Basin Principals met in Las Vegas, Nevada to discuss the efforts to finalize the proposed Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan (LB DCP). Reclamation Commissioner Burman and several of her senior staff attended the meeting and continued to urge the Lower Basin states to work diligently to complete the LB DCP in an effort to begin the implementation of measures to conserve additional water supplies in Lake Mead. Representatives of the State of Arizona and the Central Arizona Water Conservation District indicated that there are still a number of intra-Arizona issues that must be resolved but that the Arizona Colorado River water users have recommitted to work on resolving those issues in a series of stakeholder meetings over the next few weeks. As discussed above, the recent updated results of the May 24-Month Study Report indicate that it is becoming increasingly more important to finalize and implement the LB DCP as the probability of any level of shortage condition for Lake Mead is now about 52% by 2020. Additionally, completion and implementation of the LB DCP would also have the beneficial effect of triggering the activation of the Mexican Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan component (Section IV) of Minute No. 323.

MWD & IID Joint Proposal and ICS Technical Committee Conference Call

A teleconference call among members of the ICS Technical Committee was held on May 1st to review a draft joint proposal by The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) and Imperial Irrigation District (IID) to store water conserved as Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS), created through IID's Extraordinary Conservation Intentionally Created Surplus (ECICS) programs, within MWD's ICS account in Lake Mead through the application of Section XI.G.3(B)(8) of the 2007 Interim Guidelines, which would allow ICS from a project within a state to be credited to the

ICS account of another contractor within the same state with written agreement by the funding entity. Specifically, the Guidelines state—

> "Extraordinary Conservation ICS from a project within a state may only be credited to the ICS Account of a Contractor within that state that has funded or implemented the project creating ICS, or to the ICS Account of a Contractor within the same state as the funding entity and project and with written agreement of the funding entity." (Guidelines, Section XI.G.3.B.8, page 41)

IID invested significantly in 2017 on conservation efforts, which yielded 80,937 AF above its contractual transfer obligations. The conservation was done under the three conservation measures (fallowing, seepage recovery, and tailwater recovery projects) authorized in the approved 2007 ICS exhibits for creation of ICS. Of this amount, IID stored 25,000 AF in its Lake Mead account, leaving 55,937 AF of conserved water that IID continues to seek ICS credit for.

In 2017, MWD received approval to store up to 398,000 AF of ICS in Lake Mead, but MWD was only able to create 307,809 AF of qualifying ICS credits by the end of the year. Because IID has excess conserved water and MWD has unused ICS storage capacity in Lake Mead, the two agencies proposed to resolve the situation by utilizing Section XI.G.3(B)(8) of the 2007 Interim Guidelines.

The joint MWD-IID proposal, once approved, would allow IID to store an additional 43,249 AF of its EC ICS in MWD's 2017 ICS account and to store the balance of IID's excess conservation in MWD's system. The ICS Technical Committee conference call concluded with a request for more information such as a breakdown of conservation amounts under each of the three IID ICS exhibits that were utilized to create the conserved water supplies. A follow-up call will be scheduled in the next couple of weeks with Reclamation and the ICS Technical Committee to continue the review and discussion of the joint proposal.

<u>Implementation of Minute No. 323</u>

Minute No. 323 Environmental Work Group Update

The Environmental Work Group (EWG) for Minute No. 323 met April 25th in Yuma, Arizona, followed by a trip to habitat restoration sites in the Colorado River Delta on April 26th. The binational EWG oversees the use of water and funding secured under Minute No. 323 for habitat creation and maintenance in the Delta. Under Minute No. 323, 210,000 acre-feet of water, $9 million dollars for scientific research, and $9 million dollars for restoration activities will be provided by the U.S. government, Mexican government, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The EWG is working to create a Programmatic Framework that will outline environmental restoration and monitoring through the term of the Minute, which ends in 2026. In addition to the overarching Programmatic Framework, the group will produce annual plans describing restoration, water delivery, monitoring, and research activities. The EWG reviewed drafts of the 2018 plans, which include activities funded through both Minute No. 319 and Minute No. 323, as restoration efforts transition over to the new Minute. In 2018, approximately 8,800 acre-feet of water will be used to maintain about 960 acres of new and existing habitat, as well as enhancing habitat conditions in the estuary.

Finally, the EWG meet will again on July 25th in Baja California, Mexico.

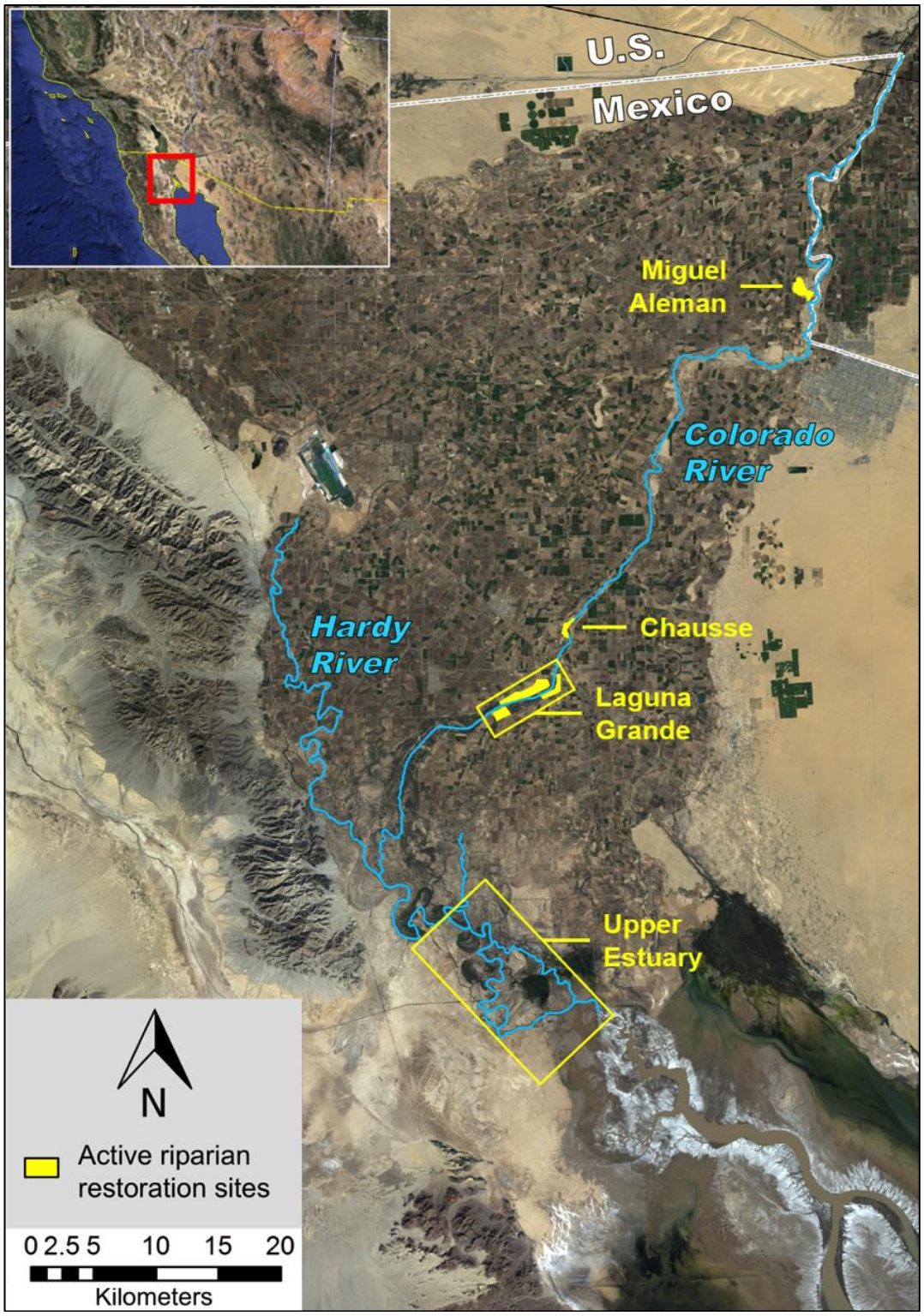

Figure 3: Map of Colorado River Delta region with target riparian and estuarine restoration sites.

Minute No. 323 Desalination Work Group Update

The Minute No. 323 Desalination work group continues to meet and work on the development of a proposed scope-of-work for a request-for-proposal to evaluate the feasibility of the development of a desalination facility on the coast of the Gulf of California in the Mexican state of Sonora. Desalinated water supplies created by the facility could be utilized by Mexico in exchange for Colorado River water supplies being made available through exchange, or some volume of the desalinated water supplies could be made available to U.S. entities via a direct delivery pipeline. The draft scope-of-work is expected to be finalized by late-May. Discussions regarding potential funding of the proposed desalination feasibility assessment are being initiated among the U.S. federal and non-federal work group participants.

Salinity Control Program Update

The next Salinity Control Forum and Advisory Council meetings will be in St. George, Utah between May 14-17, and will include a site visit to Pah Tempe Springs on the Virgin River. At the May meetings, Forum members are expected to receive an update on the Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD) 30-day field demonstration tests held at the Paradox Valley Unit (PVU) that were concluded in March. The ZLD technology is proposed as one of the alternatives for brine disposal in the PVU Environmental Impact Statement.

The ZLD treatment process involves collecting naturally-occurring brine from the existing brine production well field and employing the technology to reduce the brine to a solid product suitable for landfill disposal. The facilities would include a landfill for permanent disposal of the generated salts. A final report is being prepared by the contractor, with review provided by Reclamation's Technical Service Center, to summarize the results of the ZLD field studies. The final report will also evaluate the economic feasibility of the ZLD process. Following the anticipated release of the final report in June, a PVU cooperating agency meeting will be set up to review the results.

Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program Update

The Technical Work Group (TWG) of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program met on April 23-24 in Phoenix, Arizona. The group received updates on current hydrology, the FY-2018 and FY-2019 budgets, and recent developments important to the native and nonnative fish communities below Glen Canyon Dam.

In March, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced its intention to propose reclassification and down-listing of the humpback chub from endangered to threatened. USFWS representatives described the recently completed species status assessment and five-year review of the humpback chub to the TWG. The species currently has 5 populations: four in the Upper Basin and one in the Lower Basin, downstream of Glen Canyon Dam. The Lower Basin population is by far the largest and has increased in recent years to a fairly stable population above 10,000 individuals. The four Upper Basin populations are small but are believed to be stable or trending slightly downward. A proposed classification rule and revised recovery plan will be developed in the coming year.

Representatives from the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) updated the TWG on its intention to stock sterile rainbow trout below Glen Canyon Dam to improve the nonnative rainbow trout fishery important to local angling interests. A large year-class of rainbow trout in 2011 led to an unsustainably large population, which crashed in late 2014 and has remained quite low since. Although surveys in 2017 indicate that the rainbow trout population has stabilized and is now increasing, the number of fish large enough to be catchable is still unsatisfactorily low for angling groups. AZGFD has begun working with the National Park Service (NPS) and USFWS to secure compliance for the proposed stocking of 16,000 sterile rainbow trout in both 2018 and 2019. AZGFD also intends to develop a separate plan for annual stocking of rainbow trout from 2020-2038.

The NPS discussed the status of an Environmental Assessment (EA) under development to provide management options for nonnative aquatic species below Glen Canyon Dam. The EA is largely a response to the populations of nonnative green sunfish and brown trout recently discovered in the area but would also target other problematic nonnatives. NPS has developed a series of treatment "tiers" for various nonnative species, focusing on brown trout and green sunfish, that would allow more intensive methods of fish control as the severity of the nonnative threat increases. The potential control mechanisms discussed in the document include targeted angling, physical habitat modifications, electrofishing, and limited chemical controls. A public draft of the EA is expected by July.

Finally, at the recommendation of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program, the Department of the Interior plans to implement experimental "Macroinvertebrate Production Flows," also known as bug flows, at Glen Canyon Dam from May 1 to August 31, 2018. Bug flows were included in the 2016 Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan (LTEMP) EIS and are the first experimental flow conducted under this plan. Bug Flows consist of steady weekend releases from Glen Canyon Dam that provide favorable conditions for insects to lay eggs along the Colorado River margins and slightly higher fluctuating releases during the weekdays designed to prevent the eggs from drying out. This experiment is expected to have positive benefits for the food base supporting both aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems below Glen Canyon Dam.

The Adaptive Management Work Group will meet via webinar on May 22nd, and the TWG will meet again June 25-26 in Phoenix, Arizona.

Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

The Steering Committee of the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) met April 25th in Las Vegas, Nevada. The Steering Committee approved the minor modifications to the Program permit associated with the inclusion of the northern Mexican gartersnake that was recently added as an LCR MSCP covered species. The LCR MSCP staff also provided a brief overview of FY-17 accomplishments and expenditures. The FY-17 spending was approximately $5 million below the $30.9 million approved budget level, due to federal budget cuts and delays in conservation area construction. Native fish stocking and terrestrial species monitoring continued in FY-17. Habitat creation in FY-17 brought the total established LCR MSCP conservation area acreage to 5,700 acres, with construction continuing at the Mohave Valley backwater and set to begin at the Planet Ranch Conservation Area. In addition, several new conservation areas are under consideration, including three large parcels in California.

The LCR MSCP Work Group met on May 9-10 in San Diego, California to review the draft 2018 Work Plan and Implementation Report, which describes FY-17 accomplishments, ongoing FY-18 activities, and proposed FY-19 activities.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES

Washington D.C. Updates

Appropriations

On Monday, May 7th, the House Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee marked up its appropriations bill. On Monday, May 21st, the Senate Energy and Water appropriations bill will also be marked up. Energy and Water is one of the first appropriations bills to move and leadership has expressed a strong desire to move all of the bills through the full committee process.

A quick summary of the House Energy and Water FY-19 Appropriations bill is as follows:

- **Overall funding at** $44.7 B, which is $1.5 B more than FY-18 enacted, $8.17 B less than President's budget request and in line with the two-year budget cap agreement.
- **Reclamation** – $1.56 B, which is $75 M greater than FY-18 enacted, and includes $134 M for water storage projects authorized in the 2016 WIIN Act.
- **U.S. Army Corps** – $7.28 B, which is $451 M greater than the FY-18 enacted, and includes $2.1 B in funding for flood/storm damage reduction activities, which is $190 M greater than the FY-18 and $647 M greater than the President's budget request.
- Repeals Waters of the U.S. Rule.
- Restricts Clean Water Act application in certain agricultural areas, e.g., to farm ponds and irrigation ditches.

Committee and other Government Activities

On Wednesday, May 9th, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee began reviewing a draft Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) bill. While no official document has been released yet, it is expected that there will be strong support to move this legislation.

Mr. Don Barnett with the Salinity Control Forum was in Washington, D.C. the week of April 23rd and the Board's Washington D.C representative, Ms. Sara Tucker, joined him for several meetings with delegation and staff. The majority of those meetings were positive and staff indicated support for the Basin States and the Forum's appropriations requests.

Farm Bill

The House Agriculture Committee marked up a partisan version of the Farm Bill earlier in April (H.R. 2). While the bill passed out of the House Agriculture committee on a 26-20 vote margin we do not expect the current version of the bill to be received well in the Senate because it includes changes to certain programs, like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program, that are not bipartisan. However, the bill does contain strong funding for Title II Conservation Programs and we expect those provision to remain intact in the final Farm Bill.

Specifically, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is provided with $3 billion every year through FY-2023. While the bill eliminates the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), it merges most of its features into EQIP such that existing enrollees will not be denied their existing benefits. The bill also includes strong funding for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) at $250 million per year. Ms. Tucker reported that the House would like to move this bill on the floor next week. The Senate has not yet released a draft Farm Bill but keeps saying it will do so soon.

State Water Project Allocation Adjustment

On April 24th, the California Department of Water Resources announced an increase in the State Water Project (SWP) allocation to 30%, up from the original 20% allocation announced in January 2018. Some of the factors that affect the determination of the allocation include snow water content, storage conditions, SWP contractor demands, and environmental constraints. A 30% SWP allocation indicates that SWP contractors can expect to receive up to 30% of requested amounts.

***